



LUMMI INDIAN BUSINESS COUNCIL

2665 KWINA ROAD BELLINGHAM, WASHINGTON 98226 (360) 312-2000

DEPARTMENT _____

DIRECT NO. _____

28 March 2019

Dear Señor José Díaz,

Congratulations from the Lummi Nation on your recent appointment as Chief Executive Officer at Parques Reunidos. We hope that you might begin this new chapter by righting a long-standing wrong.

Miami Seaquarium stole our relation Tokitae (Lolita) from us in 1970. Parque Reunidos, now the owner of Miami Seaquarium, has a chance to atone for her capture and her continued captivity by partnering with us to return Tokitae to us, her mother, her family, and to the Salish Sea.

Lummi Nation is a sovereign Indigenous Nation in the United States. Our word for the Salish Sea orcas is qwe 'lhol mechen, which means "our relations under the waves." We have had a kinship, cultural, and spiritual relationship with the qwe 'lhol mechen since time immemorial. Tokitae is part of our family.

In the wild, these orcas stay with their mothers for their entire lives. Tokitae's mother is still alive, and Tokitae still regularly calls out for her family by singing the family song. Our traditional teachings are that orcas are people. Science is now proving that orca intelligence, culture, society, language, and compassion are indeed much like our own.

Tokitae's abduction was so violent and clearly unethical that the capture of orcas was declared illegal in United States waters shortly after. Science has shown that captivity profoundly damages the bodies and minds, and shortens the natural life spans, of marine mammals (please see the recent National Geographic article from 3.25.2019)The American public largely condemns orca captivity. Seaquarium's empty parking lots seems to indicate such captivity is also unprofitable. By contrast, if you work with us in repatriating Tokitae, Miami Seaquarium will be seen as an advocate for orcas and Indigenous cultural rights. We can imagine how this might play out to business –as well as moral– profit for you.

We appreciate the efforts of PETA and other organizations calling for her release and repatriation to our shared homeland, the Salish Sea. It is our sacred obligation to bring her home, and as a Sovereign Nation, we are fully committed to her return.

We urge you work with us to make this happen in a timely fashion. By working together to do the right thing, we can all benefit.

We would like to extend an invitation for you to visit Lummi Nation to see our –and Tokitae's– home in the Salish Sea. If you are not able to come to us, we would like to meet with you at your office in Madrid.

Hy'shqe (gracias).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lawrence Solomon". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Lawrence" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Solomon".

Lawrence Solomon, Secretary of the Lummi Nation
telephone: 360-384-7126